

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BRUSSE 04994 171357Z

ACTION DOTE-00

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DEPT PASS DOT FOR J. HERZ

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, ETRN, BE

SUBJECT: TRANSPORT MINISTRY ORGANIZATION

REF: STATE 104263

1. BELGIAN DELEGATION TO JUNE 1-3 ATHENS ECMT MEETING WILL BE LED BY COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSPORT MINISTER JOS CHABERT, UNLESS A NEW BELGIAN GOVERNMENT WITH A DIFFERENT TRANSPORT MINISTER TAKES POWER BEFORE THEN (CONSIDERED UNLIKELY). CHABERT IS PRESENTLY FIRST VICE PRESIDENT OF ECMT. OTHER BELGIAN DELEGATES, ALL FROM THE TRANSPORT MINISTRY, WILL PROBABLY BE F. DE WOLF, CHEF DE CABINET (CHIEF OF MINISTER'S STAFF); J. VREBOS, SECRETARY GENERAL; AND M. POPPE, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF TRANSPORTATION.

2. BELGIUM DOES NOT EXPECT TO RAISE ANY SUBJECT OF PARTICULAR NATIONAL INTEREST AT THE ATHENS MEETING. WHEN WE DISCUSSED PLANS FOR THE MEETING WITH CHEF DE CABINET DE WOLF AND ADVISER SINNAEVE ON MAY 13, HOWEVER, THEY SUGGESTED THAT SECRETARY ADAMS CONSIDER WHETHER THE U.S. GOVERNMENT MIGHT BE PREPARED TO CHANGE ITS STATUS IN THE ECMT FROM "OBSERVER" TO "ASSOCIATE MEMBER". IN ADDITION

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TO 19 EUROPEAN FULL MEMBERS, ECMT PRESENTLY HAS THREE ASSOCIATE MEMBERS: AUSTRALIA, CANADA AND JAPAN. THE U.S. IS THE ONLY COUNTRY WITH OBSERVER STATUS. NOTING THE NON-EXISTENCE OF ANY OECD TRANSPORT MINISTER COUNCIL, DE WOLF AND SINNAEVE ARGUED THAT ECMT IS THE MOST APPROPRIATE BODY FOR COORDINATION AMONG TRANSPORT MINISTERS, BUT THAT IT WOULD PROFIT FROM A CLOSER ASSOCIATION WITH THE U.S.

MESSRS. DE WOLF AND SINNAEVE THOUGHT THEIR MINISTER MIGHT
RAISE THIS IDEA WITH THE SECRETARY ADAMS
ON THE MARGINS OF THE MEETINGS.

3. THE BELGIANS EXPLAINED THAT THEY HAVE A SPECIAL FEELING
FOR THE ECMT, SINCE IT BEGAN AS A BELGIAN INITIATIVE IN
1953. BELGIUM CHAIRED THE ORGANIZATION FOR ITS TENTH
ANNIVERSARY IN 1963, AND IT WILL BE BELGIUM'S TURN AGAIN
FOR THE TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY NEXT YEAR. MESSRS.
DE WOLF, VREBOS AND POPPE HAVE BEEN ACTIVE IN ECMT FOR
MANY YEARS; IN FACT, POPPE HAS ATTENDED EVERY MEETING,
DE WOLF THINKS.

4. DE WOLF AND SINNAEVE ADVISED THAT THERE ARE BOUND TO
BE QUESTIONS FOR SECRETARY ADAMS FROM THE FRENCH AND
OTHERS ABOUT THE STATUS OF CONCORDE LANDING RIGHTS AT
JFK AIRPORT. THEY SAID THAT THE ONE IMPORTANT TRANSPORTATION
BILATERAL ISSUE OF INTEREST TO BELGIUM--S SECOND
U.S. LANDING POINT FOR SABENA AT ATLANTA--MAY BE RAISED
INFORMALLY BY MISINTER CHABERT WITH SECRETARY ADAMS.
CHABERT DISCUSSED THIS MATTER WITH SECRETARY COLEMAN
LAST YEAR. DE WOLF TOLD US THAT PRIME MINISTER TINDEMANS
HAS PURSUED THIS ISSUE WITH VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE IN
JANUARY AND WITH PRESIDENT CARTER IN LONDON LAST WEEK. A
FRESH FORMAL DEMARCHE HAS BEEN PLANNED BY THE BELGIANS,
BUT HAS BEEN DELAYED WHILE THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT IS
IN CARETAKER STATUS AWAITING FORMATION OF THE NEW ONE.
RENNER

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